

VZCZCXRO5000
OO RUEHDU RUEHMR RUEHPA RUEHRN RUEHROV RUEHTRO
DE RUEHKH #0143/01 0301436
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 301436Z JAN 08
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9832
INFO RUEHZO/AFRICAN UNION COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RHMFISS/CJTF HOA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 000143

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, SE WILLIAMSON, AF/SPG

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/30/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [AU](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: FESTIVE IGHQ HANDOVER SENDS CLEAR WARNING TO
KHARTOUM

Classified By: CDA Alberto M. Fernandez, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (SBU) Summary: At the handover of a US-built military facility for the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in Juba, GOSS President Salva Kiir warned of rising tensions related to border disputes, military incursions from the north and other failed commitments to the CPA by the National Congress Party (NCP). End summary.

A MONUMENTAL STATUE AND A GOAT SACRIFICE

¶2. (SBU) The Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), the USG and contractor Dyncorp pulled out all the stops for a festive handover of the SPLA's Interim General Headquarters (IGHQ), located near Juba's International Airport on January 28. CDA Fernandez, CG Juba Datta and DLO welcomed President of the GOSS (First Vice President of Sudan) and SPLA Commander in Chief Salva Kiir for a whirlwind tour of the facilities including the fully stocked medical clinic, Kiir's CIC office and other sites before proceeding to the unveiling of a massive, larger than life statue of SPLA founder John Garang. The camouflage-wearing, Kalashnikov-carrying statue of the fallen leader suggestively points north from where South Sudan's biggest threat comes.

¶3. (SBU) Kiir and his senior officers then proceeded with Embassy and Consulate staff to the parade ground where the American flag was lowered and the flag of South Sudan was raised (no flags of a united Sudan were anywhere to be seen). A series of speeches included remarks by Minister of SPLA Affairs Dominic Dim Deng and SPLA Chief of Staff LTG Oyai Deng Ajak who noted that "enemies of South Sudan had overrun the building site early on and slaughtered a black goat to curse the SPLA" (referring to local Bahri inhabitants of the area who felt dispossessed by the US-built project) but this does not deter us. Part of the ceremony included the incorporation of 35 new medical staff into the ranks of the SPLA to man the state of the art (for Juba) clinic.

¶4. (SBU) Entertainment included popular songs in English, Juba Arabic and Dinka including a historic Dinka war song that had many senior officers, recruits and serving woman dancing on the dusty parade ground (after the song, an angry Salva Kiir asked that such songs promoting war not be played again, "we want peace and need to build a culture of peace and we don't go to war again unless the SPLA/SPLM leadership says so"). CG Datta spoke about US development projects in South Sudan, including establishing an INL program in the near future. He also remarked that "some think that our support for the SPLA is wrong but it is fully a part of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA)". CDA Fernandez recalled

that "this is also a moment to remember and respect many who struggled and sacrificed to achieve the possibility of lives of dignity, here in South Sudan and in the whole country." He then read a well-received congratulatory statement by AF Assistant Secretary Jendayi Frazer.

15. (SBU) Salva Kiir then spoke extemporaneously thanking the State Department, CG Juba and Embassy Khartoum for the new IGHQ noting that "there is now no excuse for officers of the SPLA to do their duties and implement orders very well." He added that the United States was the major donor to South Sudan during the long and bitter civil war, a fact that was deeply appreciated by everyone in the South. He said that the work of the SPLA and this complex "was not being done to oppress anyone or threaten anyone" and that seeing the SPLA being sheltered and trained was an important peace dividend. He added that the way to stop all wars in Sudan is through democratic transformation. "Some in Khartoum are uncomfortable when we talk about this and democracy is not easy, but this is really the only way forward," he argued.

A NEW PROXY WAR BY KHARTOUM

16. (SBU) Kiir called for accelerated disarmament of civilian populations in Upper Nile and Northern Bahr al-Ghazal states and described recent bloody clashes between heavily armed Misseriya Arab tribesmen, ostensibly herding cattle, and the SPLA as "not really between the Misseriya and us, but caused by those who want to push us off our land in South Sudan." He added that GOSS VP Machar is trying to defuse the border situation in meetings with VP Ali Osman Taha and his team but there seems to be a concerted effort to push the border

KHARTOUM 00000143 002 OF 002

south, "I want to make it clear that Aweil (the capital of Northern Bahr al-Ghazal and deep in the South) is not the border." Kiir expressed hopes for peace but "if anyone wants to fight us, we will defend ourselves."

17. (SBU) The Southern President then laid out three points on the recent fighting which is increasingly drawing SPLA attention: First, the Misseriya Arabs grazing on the Kiir River (Bahr al-Ghazal) and points south into Bahr al-Ghazal state, is not opposed by the SPLM. But these cattle herders should not be armed because the local Ngok Dinka population has been disarmed. Kiir remarked that unarmed seasonal migration had been worked out with the warlike Baggara Rizeigat from Southern Darfur without any problems. If the Misseriya insisted on going south armed "then the Dinka should be armed and each will do what they feel is right." He asked rhetorically "why do these forces in Khartoum want the Misseriya to come south with guns in the first place?"

18. (SBU) Secondly, there is a major problem with the North/South border because the NCP has already predetermined the border to gain maximum advantage in land and resources, not allowing the Border Commission to play an even-handed role. Kiir noted, to general laughter, that the NCP is producing maps showing so much of South Sudan as being in the North "that I could not be President of South Sudan because I would be a Northerner" (Kiir comes from Northern Bahr al-Ghazal, north of Aweil and south of Abyei). Third, there is an urgent need for a separation of forces to be carried out by the Joint Defense Board (JDB) and monitored by UNMIS. A withdrawal of 20, 40 or 50 miles has been suggested but SAF units are so far south that even if they pull back that far "they are still in the South."

19. (SBU) Kiir added that never in his life had he seen such heavily armed tribal groups as these Misseriya. Ostensibly herding cattle, they had vehicle mounted 12.7 and 14.5 mm heavy machine guns, RPG-7s, 60 mm mortars. Who could have armed them and for what purpose? SPLA Chief of Staff Oyai Deng leaned over to CDA Fernandez while Kiir was speaking and

said, "you know what these are? They are the return of Janjaweed to the South."

¶10. (C) Comment: The turnover of the IG HQ and the remarks of American officials was a much needed boost to an SPLA rattled by cynical and aggressive NCP actions, especially this proxy war in Bahr al-Ghazal, only one month after the SPLM returned to the Government of National Unity. A/S Frazer's statement were widely carried in the Sudanese Arabic and English press.

But Kiir's remarks underscored the urgent need for continued, high-profile American engagement on the CPA and tangible expressions of support for the SPLM, the only force - politically or militarily - that can stand up to an NCP which seems to be emboldened by recent events in Darfur, Kenya (distracting American attention from Sudan), New York and Washington, where the NCP is betting that a "lame duck" American Administration can do nothing for, or to, the regime in Khartoum. End comment.

FERNANDEZ